



Testimony of  
**Melodie Peters, President**  
**AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO**

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
February 6, 2015

***SB 850 AN ACT AMENDING THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR LOBBYISTS TO REDEFINE  
"LOBBYING" AND "EXPENDITURE", DEFINE "GRASS ROOTS LOBBYING" AND RAISE  
THE THRESHOLD FOR LOBBYIST REGISTRATION.***

Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am the President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of union of nearly 29,000 public and private sector employees including state employees, nurses, healthcare workers, teachers and other school personnel.

I am submitting testimony in opposition of SB 850 An Act Amending the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists to Redefine "Lobbying" and "Expenditure", Define "Grass Roots Lobbying" and Raise the Threshold for Lobbyist Registration.

The ability of people to express their opinion on the current issues being addressed by the Government is a basic right. Allowing people to collectively organize a voice to express these opinions provides an avenue that is both streamlined and succinct to our elected officials. This legislation would have a silencing effect on this practice, by restricting the ability to reach out to fellow members of the general public.

In 2013 legislation was proposed in the city of Hartford to eliminate Clark School, a neighborhood school. The parents and activists within that community were able to organize a united movement with a clear message to save their community school. The legislation in SB 850 would have required these individuals to become registered lobbyists and would have stalled this movement whose only goal was to provide a better future for their children and their community and I am sure that is not the goal of this committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on this very important bill. I urge you to oppose SB 850.